

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 195542 TOSEC 090042

FOL SENT ACTION TO SECSTATE INFO BONN LONDON MADRID MOSCOW
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AUG 18, 1975 FROM LISBON

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 4687

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, PO

SUBJ: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: KEY MEMBER OF MELO ANTUNES GROUP HAS TOLD US HE EXPECTS
COMING WEEK TO BE DECISIVE. POSITION OF COPCON COMMANDER GENERAL
OTELLO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO IS KEY FACTOR, AND MELO ANTUNES'
GROUP IS SEEKING COMPROMISE TO ENSURE OTELO'S SUPPORT. PRIME
MINISTER GONCALVES MADE NERVOUS ADDRESS TO NATION AUGUST 16,
APPEALING FOR SUPPORT FROM PEOPLE FOR FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERN-
MENT. PCP RALLY IN ALCOBACA AUGUST 16 PRODUCED VIOLENCE. ROSA
COUTINHO LEFT FOR CUBA AUGUST 18. INTERSINDICAL STRIKE
AUGUST 19 WILL TAKE PLACE IN GREATER LISBON AREA ONLY. TRADI-
TIONAL SOURCES OF COMMUNIST SUPPORT -- AFM, LABOR AND MEDIA --
ALL FACE INTERNAL PROBLEMS AT TIME WHEN THEIR SUPPORT IS MOST
NEEDED BY PCP. BUT COMMUNISTS STILL HAVE ASSETS. END SUMMARY

1. CONVERSATION WITH TOMAS ROSA: ARMED FORCES MOVEMENT (AFM)
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MEMBER AND SUPPORTER FOR THE MELO ANTUNES DOCUMENT, CAPTAIN
TOMAS ROSA, TOLD EMBOFF AUGUST 17 THAT ANTUNES GROUP SATISFIED
WITH SUPPORT THEIR DOCUMENT RECEIVING FROM MILITARY UNITS.
ROSA SAID HE EXPECTED THIS WEEK TO BE DECISIVE. HE STATED

THAT ANTUNES GROUP RECEIVING NO HELP FROM OUTSIDE AND DOES NOT BELIEVE IT WILL BE NEEDED. WHILE ALERT TO POSSIBILITY OF PREEMPTIVE ARRESTS BY GONCALVES SUPPORTERS, ROSA SAID THIS WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY PRECIPITATE VIOLENT REACTION BY MILITARY.

ANTUNES GROUP SUSPECTED ATTEMPT TO ARREST THEM ON AUGUST 15 AND WAS ON ALERT, WITH COOPERATION OF COPCON AND GENERAL OTELO SARAIVA DE CARVALHO. ROSA CLAIMED OTELO COOPERATED WITH PROVISION THAT REVOLUTION NOT VEER RIGHT. ANTUNES GROUP BELIEVES THEY CAN ACCOMMODATE OTELO'S DEMANDS FOR POPULAR ASSEMBLIES ON LOCAL LEVEL SO LONG AS "TRUE" ELECTIONS ARE ASSURED. WHILE ROSA CONFIDENT ANTUNES GROUP HAS STRENGTH, HE ADMITS THAT TIME IS ON SIDE OF GONCALVES AS LONG AS STATUS QUO IS MAINTAINED.

2. GONCALVES STATEMENT: SPEAKING TO NATION EVENING AUGUST 16 FOLLOWING EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF COUNCIL OF MINISTERS, PRIME MINISTER GONCALVES CALLED UPON THE PORTUGUESE PEOPLE TO DEMAND AN URGENT END TO THE "POLITICAL AMBIGUITIES WHICH ARE SO COM-PROMISING TO THE UNITY OF THE ARMED FORCES..." HE URGED ALL TO RALLY AROUND THE FIFTH PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT, WHICH HE DESCRIBED AS ALREADY A "GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL SALVATION." BUT, HE NOTED, THE MINIMUM CONDITIONS ESSENTIAL FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CARRY OUT POLICIES ALREADY UNDERWAY HAVE NOT BEEN MET. THE RESULTING SITUATION HE CONCLUDED WAS "REGRETTABLE" AND "UNACCEPTABLE."

3. INTERSINDICAL GENERAL STRIKE: THE INTERSINDICAL HAS MODIFIED ITS CALL FOR A NATIONWIDE HALF-HOUR GENERAL STRIKE ON AUGUST 19 TO PROTEST CURRENT VIOLENCE AGAINST THE LEFT. THE STRIKE WILL NOW BE CONFINED TO THE GREATER LISBON AREA ONLY. THE PS HAS CALLED FOR ITS SUPPORTERS NOT TO JOIN IN.

4. VIOLENCE: PCP RALLY OF 2,000 PERSONS IN ALCOBACA, ATTENDED BY PCP GENERAL SECRETARY ALVARO CUNHAL, WAS ATTACKED BY LARGE CROWDS NIGHT OF AUGUST 16. EXCHANGE OF SHOTS BETWEEN ATTACKERS AND PCP SECURITY FORCES LEFT ABOUT 20 WOUNDED BEFORE TROOPS ARRIVED TO DISPERSE CROWDS. PCP DIRECTORATE OF REGIONAL ORGAN-IZATION FOR WEST AND ALENTEJO (DORON) AND MDP/CDE CENTRAL CONFIDENTIAL

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COMMITTEE SUBSEQUENTLY ISSUED STATEMENTS CONDEMNING VIOLENCE, CALLING FOR MEASURES TO END IT, AND LAUDING ACTION BY PCP MILITANTS AT RALLY. PERHAPS FOOLISHLY, THE PCP HAS SCHEDULED A RALLY IN OPORTO ON THE EVENING OF AUGUST 19, WITH CUNHAL AGAIN THE FEATURE ATTRACTION. WEEKEND VIOLENCE ELSEWHERE INCLUDED:
-- IN GAIA, A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL WAS THROWN AT MES OFFICES.
-- IN ANGRA (AZORES), PCP OFFICES WERE REPORTEDLY ATTACKED.

5. ROSA COUTINHO VISITS CUBA: ADM. ROSA COUTINHO DEPARTED AUGUST 18 ON A WEEK-LONG VISIT TO CUBA AT THE INVITATION OF RAUL CASTRO. FOLLOWING THE CUBA VISIT, COUTINHO WILL HEAD THE PORTUGUESE DELEGATION TO THE CONFERENCE OF NON-ALIGNED NATIONS IN LIMA, PERU, AUGUST 25-29. HE PLANS TO RETURN TO PORTUGAL

SEPTEMBER 2.

6. AFM LIAISON OFFICE IN AIR FORCE SUSPENDED: A SPOKESMAN FOR THE ARMED FORCES GENERAL STAFF CONFIRMED ON AUGUST 16 THAT ACTIVITIES OF THE AFM COORDINATING OFFICE IN THE AIR FORCE HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED FOR THE DURATION OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS.

7. "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" STAFF SPLITS: CITING "GROWING WAVE OF DISBELIEF WHICH HAS BROKEN OVER COMMUNIST-LINING "DIARIO DE NOTICIAS," 30 OF 54 DIARIO STAFF WRITERS HAVE CIRCULATED A DOCUMENT CRITICIZING THE PAPER'S IDEOLOGICAL ORIENTATION AND ITS EXCLUSION OF "INDEPENDENT" CONTRIBUTORS. FULL DETAILS OF THE DISSIDENTS' POSITION WILL BE MADE PUBLIC AT PRESS CONFERENCE CALLED FOR AUGUST 23. THE AUGUST 15 EDITION OF DIARIO CARRIED A FRONT PAGE STATEMENT BY "ACTIVE WORKERS OF DIARIO DE NOTICIAS" WHICH CHARACTERIZED THE DOCUMENT BEING CIRCULATED AS "DIVISIONIST" AND "REACTIONARY" MANEUVER.

8. COMMENT: CAPTAIN ROSA'S COMMENTS REINFORCE OUR VIEW THAT OTELO REMAINS THE KEY FACTOR IN EFFORT TO OUST GONCALVES FACTION. TALKS ARE UNDERWAY BETWEEN MEMBERS OF THE MELO ANTUNES GROUP AND THOSE CLOSE TO OTELO SEEKING SOME WAY TO MELD THE MELO ANTUNES DOCUMENT WITH CONCEPTS CONTAINED IN THE RADICAL DOCUMENT SURFACED ON AUGUST 13 BY COPCON OFFICERS. THE LATTER DOCUMENT REPORTEDLY ENJOYS OTELO'S SYMPATHY. IF THIS CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED, GONCALVES AND THE PCP WILL VIRTUALLY STAND ALONE.

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9. GONCALVES' AUGUST 16 ADDRESS TO THE NATION POINTS UP THE GROWING ISOLATION OF GONCALVES AND HIS PRO-PCP SUPPORTERS. THEY ARE UNDER ATTACK FROM THE MODERATES ON THE RIGHT AND THE RADICALS ON THE LEFT. TRADITIONAL STRONGHOLDS OF COMMUNIST SUPPORT -- LABOR, THE MEDIA, AND THE AFM ITSELF -- ARE FACING INTERNAL PROBLEMS AND REPRESENT COMPLICATING FACTORS RATHER THAN SOURCES OF PCP SUPPORT IN THIS CRITICAL TIME. BUT COMMUNISTS HAVE ASSETS AND GONCALVES IS STILL PRIME MINISTER.

CARLUCCI
UNQUOTE SISCO

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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